

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, April 19, 1877, with transcript

Letter from Miss Mabel Hubbard to Mr. Alexander Graham Bell. (April 19, 1877). My darling Alec:

If you will excuse my writing on this stray sheet I must thank you for your two letters received this morning, One begun in Visible speech, the other announcing the improvement in the telephone. Thank you for all the trouble you took to write. I have read and reread it until I have the Visible Speech part of it almost by heart. Of course when I told you I wanted you to give me lessons I meant what I said. I do care a little bit more than I did whether I speak well or not, but this wish is so little that I doubt if it will carry me through any great difficulties. I have so often determined with all the strength there is in me to try and work hard and have done so for a time and then given up so I don't much believe I will try very long, it isn't in me. But it is not very hard for me to read Visible Speech and if you will give me something I am sure enough of myself to promise to read some every day. I am speaking very coldly very unkindly after your warm earnest letter but how dare I say anything, promise anything when I have so often failed. If my mother whom I so love and who has worked so hard has not succeeded in making me try how can you? Just at present I am in earnest in wishing to do better but I know this will not last. I don't want you to write very much to me in Visible Speech because I cannot bear to have you sitting up night after night working at it when I am resting and when you ought to be in bed. Cannot you send as the exercises of your pupils, or find some scraps of writing anywhere about. If you did not have to sit up to do it I would be delighted to have you write to me as it is I would rather not have but a postal saying you are well and all is going on well.

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I begin to fear we shall not go down to Cambridge at present. Mamma made — a mistake in thinking Berta and Grace had their vacation in May and now she hardly expects to be able to leave all her sewing here.

I sent you two letters yesterday, I thought the first one had gone long ago and wondered why you never spoke of it. It was in my Sacque pocket. When do you get my letters I always write in the afternoon and mail them before six. They ought to take the night train reaching Exeter Place the next morning at eight or nine. As you write in the evening I never hear from you until two days afterward.

Yesterday we went to see the “Negro Minstrels” I comprehend now as I never did before the insult in bringing you to their lever. I was thoroughly disgusted with the whole thing. One of the singers sang about Blue Glass beautiful blue glass and then about your telephone. I caught the two words right off though I understood nothing else isn't it rather funny they should speak of it after all we have said about them? They are white men, the blacking is overdone. I wish you would go and see Cousin Mary and speak to Prof. Horsford about the?erman letter, it may be very important.

Mamma is anxious you should include no agreement with mr. Gower until you have seen or heart from Papa. Of course if Mr. Ponton is going to postpone until fall that makes your agreement with him null and void and Mamma thinks Papa may want to make some other arrangement anyway she is anxious you should wait, Papa will be back next week. I sent copies of your telegram and letter from Mr. Ponton to Papa and the originals to Mr. Sanders.

With very much love dear Alec. Ever yours, Mabel.